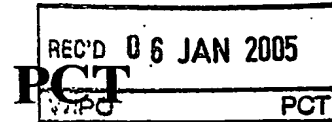


PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

To:
BRUCE E. PEACOCK
WEGMAN, HESSLER & VANDERBURG
6055 ROCKSIDE WOODS BOULEVARD
SUITE 200
CLEVELAND, OH 44131



WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

(PCT Rule 43bis.1)

Date of mailing (day/month/year) 04 JAN 2005	
FOR FURTHER ACTION See paragraph 2 below	
Applicant's or agent's file reference 020354079P2P	
International application No. PCT/US04/31365	International filing date (day/month/year) 24 September 2004 (24.09.2004)
Priority date (day/month/year) 13 February 2004 (13.02.2004)	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC IPC(7): C02F 5/14 and US Cl.: 210/699	
Applicant GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY	

1. This opinion contains indications relating to the following items:

- ☒ Box No. I Basis of the opinion
- ☐ Box No. II Priority
- ☐ Box No. III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- ☐ Box No. IV Lack of unity of invention
- ☒ Box No. V Reasoned statement under Rule 43bis.1(a)(i) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- ☐ Box No. VI Certain documents cited
- ☒ Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application
- ☒ Box No. VIII Certain observations on the international application

2. FURTHER ACTION

If a demand for international preliminary examination is made, this opinion will be considered to be a written opinion of the International Preliminary Examining Authority ("IPEA") except that this does not apply where the applicant chooses an Authority other than this one to be the IPEA and the chosen IPEA has notified the International Bureau under Rule 66.1bis(b) that written opinions of this International Searching Authority will not be so considered.

If this opinion is, as provided above, considered to be a written opinion of the IPEA, the applicant is invited to submit to the IPEA a written reply together, where appropriate, with amendments, before the expiration of 3 months from the date of mailing of Form PCT/ISA/220 or before the expiration of 22 months from the priority date, whichever expires later.
For further options, see Form PCT/ISA/220.

3. For further details, see notes to Form PCT/ISA/220.

Name and mailing address of the ISA/ US Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230	Authorized officer Peter A. Hruskoci Telephone No. 571-272-0987 <div style="text-align: right;"> <i>Jean Proctor</i> <i>Paralegal Specialist</i> </div>
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Form PCT/ISA/237 (cover sheet) (January 2004)

**WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY**

International application No.

PCT/US04/31365

Box No. I Basis of this opinion

1. With regard to the language, this opinion has been established on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

☐ This opinion has been established on the basis of a translation from the original language into the following language _____, which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rules 12.3 and 23.1(b)).

2. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application and necessary to the claimed invention, this opinion has been established on the basis of:

a. type of material

☐ a sequence listing

☐ table(s) related to the sequence listing

b. format of material

☐ in written format

☐ in computer readable form

c. time of filing/furnishing

☐ contained in international application as filed.

☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority for the purposes of search.

3. ☐ In addition, in the case that more than one version or copy of a sequence listing and/or table relating thereto has been filed or furnished, the required statements that the information in the subsequent or additional copies is identical to that in the application as filed or does not go beyond the application as filed, as appropriate, were furnished.

4. Additional comments:

WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

International application No.
PCT/US04/31365

Box No. V Reasoned statement under Rule 43 bis.1(a)(i) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Claims 6, 9-11, and 13-15	YES
	Claims 1-5, 7, 8, and 12	NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims NONE	YES
	Claims 1-15	NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims 1-15	YES
	Claims NONE	NO

2. Citations and explanations:

Claims 1-5, 7, 8, and 12 lack novelty under PCT Article 33(2) as being anticipated by Becker 4,446,028.

It is submitted that Becker disclose (see col. 2 line 3 through col. 5 line 56) a method of inhibiting scale formation in a desalting or desalination system as recited in the instant claims.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, and 12 lack novelty under PCT Article 33(2) as being anticipated by Becker 4,446,026.

It is submitted that Becker disclose (see col. 2 line 3 through col. 5 line 13) a method of inhibiting scale formation in a desalting or desalination system as recited in the instant claims.

Claims 6, 11, and 13-15 lack an inventive step under PCT Article 33(3) as being obvious over Becker (028) or Becker (026) in view of Hodgson et al. 4,204,953. The claims differ from the references as applied above by reciting the addition of a polymaleic acid or anhydride, and the inhibition of magnesium hydroxide scale. Hodgson et al. disclose (see col. 1 line 14 through col. 4 line 56) that it is known in the art to add polymaleic anhydrides to saline water evaporators to inhibit scale deposition including magnesium hydroxide. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to modify the references as applied above, by addition of polymaleic anhydride in view of the teachings of Hodgson et al., to aid in inhibiting scale deposition including magnesium hydroxide in the desalination system.

Claims 9 and 10 lack an inventive step under PCT Article 33(3) as being obvious over Becker (028) or Becker (026) in view of Bendiksen et al. 5,087,376. The claims differ from the references as applied above by reciting that the phosphonate polymer is poly(vinylphosphonic acid). Bendiksen et al. disclose (see col. 3 line 13 through col. 4 line 43) that it is known in the art to add a polymer of vinyl phosphonic acid to inhibit scale deposition including magnesium salts in aqueous desalination systems. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to modify the references as applied above, by addition of poly(vinylphosphonic acid) in view of the teachings of Bendiksen et al., to aid in inhibiting scale deposition in the desalination system.

Claims 6, 9-11, and 13-15 meet the criteria set out in PCT Article 33(2), because the prior art does not disclose a method of inhibiting scale formation comprising the method steps recited in the instant claims.

Claims 1-15 meet the criteria set out in PCT Article 33(4), and thus have industrial applicability because the subject matter claimed can be made or used in industry to inhibit scale formation in desalination systems.

**WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY**

International application No.

PCT/US04/31365

Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:

The description is objected to as containing the following defect(s) under PCT Rule 66.2(a)(iii) in the form or contents thereof: In the description on page 6 last line, "100,00" is erroneous.

**WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY**

International application No.

PCT/US04/31365

Box No. VIII Certain observations on the international application

The following observations on the clarity of the claims, description, and drawings or on the questions whether the claims are fully supported by the description, are made:

Claim 9 is objected to under PCT Rule 66.2(a)(v) as lacking clarity under PCT Article 6 because the claim is indefinite for the following reason(s): In claim 9 line 1 "8" appears to be erroneous, and should be changed to - 7 -. It is further noted that poly(vinylphosphonic acid) as recited in claim 9 does not appear to be included in the structure recited in claim 7.